



## NASA OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

OFFICE OF AUDITS  
SUITE 8U71, 300 E ST SW  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20546-0001

JUN 19 2019

Daniel Oberhaus  
MuckRock News  
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411A Highland Ave  
Somerville, MA 02144-2516  
Email: [73547-20320964@requests.muckrock.com](mailto:73547-20320964@requests.muckrock.com)

Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request 2019-35

Dear Mr. Oberhaus:

This letter concerns the May 16, 2019, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request submitted to the NASA, Office of Inspector General. The FOIA request was assigned tracking number 19-OIG-F-00541. Pursuant to the FOIA (5 U.S.C. §552), you specifically requested:

“A copy of any NASA OIG reports and/or memos regarding the SpaceX crew Dragon anomaly that occurred on April 20, 2019.

All emails to and/or from NASA OIG Inspector General Paul Martin regarding the SpaceX crew Dragon anomaly that occurred on April 20, 2019.

I limit this request to records dated between April 20, 2019 and the present, and to records that have NOT been published on any NASA website.”

Enclosed is one email chain responsive to your request. Certain information has been withheld or redacted pursuant to FOIA Exemption (b)(5) which protects "inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency." Exemption (b)(5) incorporates certain traditionally recognized privileges such as the "deliberative process privilege," the general purpose of which is to "prevent injury to the quality of agency decisions. The exemption protects not merely documents, such as predecisional documents, recommendations and opinions on legal or policy matters, but also the integrity of the deliberative process itself where the exposure of that process would result in harm.

In addition, redactions to the enclosed document have been applied pursuant to FOIA Exemption (b)(6), which allows withholding information, which "would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy."

For your information, Congress excluded three discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the requirements of the FOIA. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(c) (2006 & Supp. IV 2010). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of the FOIA. This is a standard notification that is given to all our requesters and should not be taken as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist.

You may contact our FOIA Public Liaison, Francis P. LaRocca at 202-358-2575 for any further assistance and to discuss any aspect of your request. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov); telephone at 202-741-5770; toll free at 1-877-684-6448; or facsimile at 202-741-5769.

You also have the right to appeal this initial determination to Deputy Inspector General, George Scott. Pursuant to 14 CFR §1206.700(b), the appeal must (1) be in writing; (2) be addressed to the following:

NASA, Office of Inspector General  
Headquarters  
300 E Street, SW, Suite 8V39  
Washington, D.C. 20546-0001  
Attn: Deputy Inspector General, George Scott

(3) be identified clearly on the envelope and in the letter as "Freedom of Information Act Appeal"; (4) include a copy of the request for the Agency record and a copy of the adverse initial determination; (5) to the extent possible, state the reasons why the requester believes the adverse initial determination should be reversed; and (6) must be postmarked and sent to the Deputy Inspector General within 90 calendar days of the date of receipt of the initial determination.

Sincerely,



Brian Mullins  
Acting Assistant Inspector General for Audits  
OIG FOIA Officer – Audits

**Cc:** Scott, George A. (HQ-WAH10); b6

George and I will be in JSC Tuesday and Wednesday but back at HQ on Thursday. Perhaps [REDACTED] can arrange a brief discussion then.

**From:** Bowman, Ridge C. (HQ-WBH10)  
**Sent:** Monday, April 22, 2019 5:05 PM  
**To:** Martin, Paul K. (HQ-WAH10); Mullins, Brian (HQ-WBH10); Tolomeo, Raymond (HQ-WBH10); (b) (6)  
**Cc:** Scott, George A. (HQ-WAH10)  
**Subject:** RE: SpaceX anomaly

At this point, the team has not found any information specifically related to the anomaly beyond what is available to the public. However, in our review of available documentation, we found b6

\_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

• B5 [REDACTED]

We are going to continue to reach out to key folks and nail down the facts as they emerge. We may want to have a short chat sometime soon to discuss.

Ridge

**From:** Martin, Paul K. (HQ-WAH10)  
**Sent:** Monday, April 22, 2019 9:16 AM  
**To:** Bowman, Ridge C. (HQ-WBH10) <ridge.c.bowman@nasa.gov>; Mullins, Brian (HQ-WBH10) <brian.mullins@nasa.gov>; Tolomeo, Raymond (HQ-WBH10) <raymond.tolomeo@nasa.gov>; [REDACTED]

**Cc:** Scott, George A. (HQ-WAH10) <george.a.scott@nasa.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: SpaceX anomaly

Appreciate it, Ridge & Team.

Paul

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**From:** Bowman, Ridge C. (HQ-WBH10)  
**Sent:** Monday, April 22, 2019 9:12 AM  
**To:** Martin, Paul K. (HQ-WAH10); Mullins, Brian (HQ-WBH10); Tolomeo, Raymond (HQ-WBH10); [REDACTED]

**Cc:** Scott, George A. (HQ-WAH10)  
**Subject:** RE: SpaceX anomaly

Paul,

We are meeting later to discuss and will get back to you this afternoon on our thoughts/insights.

Ridge

**From:** Martin, Paul K. (HQ-WAH10)  
**Sent:** Monday, April 22, 2019 9:08 AM  
**To:** Mullins, Brian (HQ-WBH10) <[brian.mullins@nasa.gov](mailto:brian.mullins@nasa.gov)>; Tolomeo, Raymond (HQ-WBH10)



<[raymond.tolomeo@nasa.gov](mailto:raymond.tolomeo@nasa.gov)>; Bowman, Ridge C. (HQ-WBH10) <[ridge.c.bowman@nasa.gov](mailto:ridge.c.bowman@nasa.gov)>; [REDACTED]

Cc: Scott, George A. (HQ-WAH10) <[george.a.scott@nasa.gov](mailto:george.a.scott@nasa.gov)>

Subject: SpaceX anomaly

Importance: High

All:

Good morning. Any insights on how bad this is?

Paul

Video appears to show SpaceX's new spaceship for NASA exploding during a safety test

A test of the emergency escape system for SpaceX's new spacecraft designed to carry NASA astronauts into orbit went awry on Saturday, and an unverified video making the rounds on Twitter claims to show just how bad the anomaly was.

On Saturday afternoon, SpaceX attempted a static-fire test of the emergency abort system on its new Crew Dragon space capsule, which is intended for use by [NASA's Commercial Crew program](#) to ferry astronauts to and from the International Space Station.

Saturday's test, however, did not go as planned. According to a statement from SpaceX:

"Earlier today, SpaceX conducted a series of engine tests on a Crew Dragon test vehicle on our test stand at Landing Zone 1 in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The initial tests completed successfully but the final test resulted in an anomaly on the test stand.

Ensuring that our systems meet rigorous safety standards and detecting anomalies like this prior to flight are the main reasons why we test. Our teams are investigating and working closely with our NASA partners."

According to [Spaceflight Now](#), the test "sent a reddish-orange plume into the sky visible for miles around," suggesting a fairly serious malfunction of the engine systems.

On Sunday, an unverified video circulated on Twitter claiming to show the results of that test. The video appears to show a large explosion in the capsule several seconds in:

When asked about the video, SpaceX simply pointed to the statement about Saturday's test.

Eric Berger, a senior space editor at Ars Technica, [said on Twitter](#) that he understood that the video was legitimate.

When asked if any additional information about the video had been released, he said: "No there has not. But I understand the video is legitimate and it's consistent with accounts I've heard."

Saturday's test followed a [successful test flight of an uncrewed Crew Dragon capsule](#) in early March. The vehicle, carrying a human-sized dummy nicknamed "Ripley" and a [plush globe-shaped toy that quickly sold out back on Earth](#), successfully docked with the International Space Station, and [safely splashed down in the Atlantic Ocean](#) after its six-day mission, marking a significant milestone in the development of new American human-rated spacecraft.

*This post will be updated with any further information on the test from SpaceX.*